

Anthems for a seventeen year old El by harryisqueen

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Summary:

Life is confusing and scary. But there's one constant. Friends.

Anthems for a seventeen year old El

Getting old was scary. Probably the scariest thing El has ever experienced. Yeah, she was only 17 but still. It felt odd. She had only just joined the real world 4 years ago. Just began actual school 3 years ago. It was just all so scary. How rapidly she was ageing. How rapidly her friends were ageing.

Everyone was talking about college. Dustin wanted to go to Chicago for college, Lucas wanted to go to New York, Will wanted to go to Pennsylvania, Max wanted to go to California. Mike wanted to go to Florida. That was probably the scariest part. Mike wanted to go over 1,000 miles away from Hawkins.

El knew it would not be fair to hold them all down from their dreams simply because she was scared. Scared of growing up. Scared of things changing. She knew the friend group would eventually fall apart when they are all scattered, as they will be. She knew it.

Life was just scary. Undecided. El had no clue what she was going to do. Nursing seemed cool but so did being a teacher. She just did not know. It was honestly so stressful to see everyone around her passing with excellence and knowing exactly what they wanted. Yet here she was 17 with solid c's at the end of her junior year and still barely any clue what she was going to do with her life.

El had begun to find herself at the creek at the bottom of the hill of Joyce's house. Just contemplating. Contemplating life and what she was going to make of it. The world was moving. Her friends were moving and she should not expect them all to just slow down for her.

If it were up to her life would freeze here. She would stay 17-forever stay with Mike stay with her friends and they would all just be them. Whom they have always been never changing never getting older. However, El was not airheaded enough to think that would actually bring about happiness.

El let out a dramatic sigh pushing herself up dusting her hands off on her overalls. Tonight the entire party was getting together at the old junkyard for a bonfire. Dustin had been raving for weeks about Steve

buying them booze.

El began hiking her way up the hill back up to Joyce's house her bare feet digging into the grass. Hopper always lectured her about wearing shoes outside but she didn't see any point in wearing shoes for just a short walk down to the creek.

"I'm back," El called as she entered through the back door.

"Hi, sweetie are you and Will still getting together with your friends tonight? I bought some snacks from the store and dragged the sleeping bags out of the garage for you two as well." Joyce said with a bright smile.

"Thanks so much, Joyce it means a lot. I need to go put on shoes so I'll be ready to go when Will gets here." El laid a loving peck on Joyce's cheek then proceeded to her room.

El glanced at the clock on the way to her room it's flashing digital letters reading 5:37. Will would be here to pick her up in 8 minutes and she knew the others would flip if she wasn't ready on time. El did not really think they had much reason to complain seeing as Will & Mike were the only ones with enough balls to get their license.

El grabbed her shoes from there resting place at the front her room. She shoved them on her feet then put her pyjamas into her overnight bag. El left her room shutting the door behind her and making her way towards the front room where the snacks Joyce had bought were and the sleeping bags.

El somehow managed to grab it all and one trip and was now perched on the edge of the porch waiting on Will and the others arrival. Mike had offered to pick her up after his shift at Benny's but El had declined not entirely trusting his questionable driving skills.

A few short moments later Will's signature 1979 Cadillac pulled up and El rose to her feet. She picked up her overnight bag to put in the trunk deciding to leave the snacks and sleeping bags for the others to get. She had lugged them outside it was only fair they put them in the car.

“You all ready to go and get this party started?” Dustin screamed obnoxiously out the window.

“Yeah, as soon as you get Will and I’s sleeping bags,” El replied with a good-natured roll of her eyes.

El pulled open the back seat dropping into a small bow as Dustin got out of the car with a grumble. El climbed into the front seat beside will and gave the other two occupants a smile and a wave.

“Where’s Mike?” El questioned.

“I had offered to pick him up after his shift but he insisted on driving himself.” Will said.

Dustin finally had packed the snacks and sleeping bags into the back of the car and had settled himself back into the back seat. The five of them sang along to the clash much louder than necessary for the short drive to the junkyard.

Upon arriving, El saw Mike and Steve’s cars both already there. Dustin leapt out of the back of the car to what El assumed was to see if Steve had brought booze. El rolled her eyes and climbed out to retrieve her belongings from the back.

El’s hands were once again so full she could barely walk yet somehow still managed.

“I’ll get that for you malady.”

El turned to see Steve now carrying her belongings over to where a large bonfire was set up. El smiled when her eyes settled on Mike prodding the fire with his shoe.

“That doesn’t seem very safe,” El said to him with a smirk.

“I’m readjusting the logs in the fire,” Mike said his tongue poking out of the side of his mouth.

El’s lips tugged up into a smile. She grabbed the shoe from him dropping it onto the ground and wrapped her arms around him. The familiar smell of the cologne Mike used. El felt her shoulders sag in a

sense of relief.

“Why didn’t you let Will pick you up?” El mumbled into his chest.

“Why didn’t you let me pick you up?” Mike fired back.

El looked up at him “Because you suck at driving safely.”

“Hey, now I’m like the best driver.”

El rolled her eyes and was about to reply but was interrupted by Dustin.

“Guys, you want some beer? Steve brought alcohol like I had told you guys he would!”

El left Mike’s embrace to walk to grab one for herself and Mike.

It was much later in the night now and El would be lying if she said she was not at the least tipsy. Steve had not only brought beer but had revealed he also had fireball.

He had threatened the group of minors with an “If any of you little shits rat me out I’ll never hang out with you all again.”

This was only a threat to Dustin so the others ignored him while greedily continuing to drink their beer.

It was not round 2:30 am and the 7 of them were sitting around the fire passing around the bottle of Fireball. El was leaning against Mike’s front observing the loud conversation coming from the others around her.

“Guys,” El spoke up after taking a long swig of the fireball.

All 6 heads turned towards her.

“Do you think we’ll still be friends even after we all graduate? Like even if we’re all spread out?”

The 6 of them seemed to not know what to say exchanging questioning glances amongst themselves. El awkwardly shuffled to sit

up straighter against Mike.

It was finally Steve who broke the silence “You little dick heads are lucky I hang out with you now.”

Just like that, the tension was broken and everyone laughed slightly at Steve’s false disliking towards the young teens.

“Of course we’ll stay friends forever we’ve all been through so much there’s like literally nothing that could tear us apart.” Will spoke up.

Hums of agreement were exchanged amongst the group. El relaxed back against Mike.

“Yeah but it just seems so weird. We’re all getting older and none of us are gonna slow down or be expected to slow down for the others. You all seem to have your life figured out and I’m still lost” El said.

“Don’t worry little El I’ll be in Hawkins with you till the day I die,” Steve said with a grin.

“So let’s make a pact now. That no matter how old, how busy, how crazy our lives get after high school we will always be best friends. We will always stay together.” Max spoke up.

“That’s not a bad idea Max!” Lucas exclaimed.

“Yeah let’s do it” Dustin agreed, “We can like cut our palms and drip them into the fire like they do in the movies!”

“Yeah, I’m having no part in this cult shit,” Steve said.

“There’s probably a less extreme way than Dustin’s idea like maybe just shaking on it like normal people,” Mike said with a snort.

Despite the others protest somehow the 7 of them were standing over the fire. Dustin was holding the pocket knife he always kept in the side of his sock.

“Are we seriously doing this shit?” Steve questioned for probably the

10th time.

“Yes now shut up,” Dustin said barely slicing his palm to draw minimal blood and cause minimal damage.

El was 100% certain it was the alcohol that made them all comply with this craziness with little to no argument. After a few short moments, all of them had a small scratch on their palms.

“Alright, guys on the count of three drip a little bit of your blood into the fire,” Dustin said eyes gleaming with excitement.

Dustin counted to three then they all turned their hands over allowing their blood to fall into the fire. They were all silent for a few moments before Lucas broke it.

“I can’t believe you just talked us all into some weird ritual.”

Dustin just grinned at them all.

“Alright kiddos it’s time for bed if you all don’t go to sleep soon you’ll still be mildly intoxicated when you wake up and I don’t wanna hear shit from your parents,” Steve said

They all groaned but secretly knew they were extremely tired. They all situated themselves in their respective sleeping bags or under their blankets. El had originally planned to sleep in her sleeping bag but when Mike put up the offer to share the large blanket he had brought she definitely did not complain.

“Hey, Mike,” El spoke up once she was sure the others were all asleep.

“Yeah.”

“I’m scared. I know everyone promises we’ll be friends forever but we look at our parents and who are they still friends with? Life just does not work as ideally as we all want it to be. It just seems inevitable that we all drift apart.”

Mike turned over to face El “Our parents didn’t go through what we all went through with their friends. It sounds dumb but we all kind of

have an unbreakable bond and in the extremely rare probably impossible case we do drift apart you and I are forever baby.”

Mike had a sloppy definitely drunk shit-eating grin on his face. El rolled her eyes at Mike and leaned over to connect their lips in a kiss.

“Also Dustin made us do that weird ritual so like we’re all basically bound for life.”

A laugh burst through El’s lips as she flipped over so she could go to sleep.

Author's Note:

Thoughts

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